



## SMALLPOX

- What is SMALLPOX?** Smallpox is a serious, contagious, and sometimes fatal virus. The disease was eliminated worldwide after a successful vaccination program. The last case of smallpox in the United States was in 1949.
- Transmission:** Person-to-person transmission occurs when the infected person coughs or sneezes droplets and another person inhales them. Smallpox can also be spread through direct contact with infected bodily fluids or objects, such as bedding or clothing. The person is considered infected until all scabs separate from the skin and fall off.
- Signs and symptoms:** After being exposed, a person may have no symptoms for up to seven to 17 days. After this, symptoms are similar to a bad flu with fever of 101 degrees F or higher, head and body aches, vomiting, and severe backache. This may last for two to four days.
- Next, a rash begins on the face, hands, forearms, mouth, and throat, and often the palms and soles. The rash then spreads to the legs and then to the trunk. It develops more on the arms and legs than on the chest area. The rash starts with flat, red lesions that become raised bumps. Then they become pus-filled blisters that crust, scab, and fall off after nearly three weeks. Pitted, light-colored scars are frequently present after the scabs separate.
- Treatment:** There is no specific treatment for smallpox. Some patients require hospital care to receive intravenous fluids; and medicine to control fever and pain, and to treat any complications from the disease.
- Diagnosis:** Laboratory testing.
- Prevention:** Vaccination is the only prevention for smallpox. For most people, the smallpox vaccine is safe and effective. Smallpox vaccination has not been given routinely to the general public for many years. If the disease re-emerges, vaccinations would be made available to the public. Vaccination within three to four days of exposure offers protection for most individuals.

**Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness Section**  
**24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156**  
**Contact Number: 302-223-2999**

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**What can you do?**

Follow prevention recommendations above.

**Whom do you call?**

Division of Public Health, Office of Infectious Disease  
Epidemiology: 1-888-295-5156.

**Additional  
information:**

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:  
[www.cdc.gov/smallpox/about/](http://www.cdc.gov/smallpox/about/).

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